

Grandmother was an elegant cook, and she always had everything "to do with." Grandpa always kept a cow and milked it himself until he grew elderly, and then she was moved to the farm just north of the high school and the tenants kept her and delivered the milk. In her younger days grandma made butter and sold the surplus. (Your grandma James used to get butter from her.)

All her life grandma had a baked potato for her breakfast, and she always ended each meal, even after dessert, with a little bite of meat. (Grandpa's favorite meat was the chicken liver.) Grandma always sat on the north side of the table and grandpa on the east, and, when we moved over there, mother and father always sat that way, too.

They always made much of Christmas and usually had the family gathering. One year grandpa gave them both diamonds. Mother was a bar pin (which Aunt Mamie has now) and grandma's a ring (which I wear.)

(The gold bracelet with the little purse on a chain was Chloe's, and originally contained grandma and grandpa Beach's pictures. Mother must have taken the one out.)

Another year grandpa gave mother her big black lacquered easel. He was so mysterious about it, and so carefully kept the parlor door locked, that she almost went crazy with curiosity. Snatching an opportunity when everyone was gone, she got a ladder and peeked over the transom--to her everlasting regret, because then she would rather it had been a surprise at Christmas!

Neither grandma nor mother liked horses, and that undoubtedly had a great deal to do with those early cars. The electric exasperated grandpa because he could never get very far in it, and so he invested in a "white steamer." It was much too complicated for him to even consider running it; so he engaged a second cousin - a grandson of



"Washy" Hallock (son of Rhoda Beach, who was a sister of his father, Dr. Lorenzo Beach). He sent Nelson to the factory in Detroit, where the things were made, and had him taught to turn it inside out and put it together again. They had to have a pit dug in the barn floor, which permanently weakened it, so that he could get at some of the essential parts. Nelson always had to have half an hour's notice before he went anywhere, because it took that long to get up steam. But it covered the ground, and even could go twenty miles an hour. We thought we were simply flying.

Grandma loved to ride, and grandpa had a little set of steps made for her, all nicely carpeted, so that she could get into the car easily. Grandpa sat in front with Nelson, and I sat on a little chair by grandma's knee.

Grandma died when I was ten, June 13, 1910. Young as I was, she seemed very small and frail to me. I think she had a stroke at the last, but I was sent to the neighbor's to stay while she was sick. I just happened to go back to grandpa's, where I knew everybody was, and went into their bedroom. Father and mother were bending over the bed. Tommy never said a word but gathered me up in his arms and carried me out on the porch where he told me that grandma had just died.

We come over to stay with grandpa at once. He slept in the room at the head of the stairs for a while until he was too feeble to mount the stairs, for he just couldn't bear to go back to that empty bedroom. His spirit was broken, and he began to fail. To divert his mind, mother, Mamie, Nelson and I took him back to Ohio for a final visit with the beloved relatives.

When we got back, he had work started at once on the Beach mausoleum. Grandma had been laid to rest beside Sarah and Chloe. Triebel and son, of Peoria, did both the porch and the mausoleum. When grandma's last

home was ready he had the body of his baby son, who had been buried out in the little country cemetery, brought and laid to rest in the same crypt with Sarah, I think it was.

Grandfather died August 2 of the following year, literally of a broken heart.

A biography of him in a Livingston County History made this statement of him, which was really true:

"Few men have exerted a better influence upon the destiny of Fairbury or upon the individual interest of its citizens of all classes."



## My Mother

It is very difficult for me to write about my mother. We were much closer than most girls and their mothers, for we went through so much sorrow together.

One of my earliest memories of her was of her sweeping. There were no vacuum cleaners then, of course, and the carpets were heavy Brussels ones that stretched from wall to wall. She began next to the wall, and swept round and round, gathering the dirt up into a little pile in the middle.

Until grandmother Beach died, she always whistled when she worked. She told me that Tommy had envied her proficiency, and was extremely proud when he finally could beat her at it.

Mother had revolutionary ideas for those days. She believe that a house was <sup>a</sup>home for a family and not just a place to exhibit fancy possessions. Always, Tommy and his chum, Walter Gregg, were free to spread out their wooden soldiers in the parlor, and I remember playing in the guest room upstairs. It made for a mussy house, of course, at times, and mother once laughed and told me that grandfather Beach had told her that it was a good thing that she and Mamie gave parties once in a while so as to get the house all cleaned up.

Mother thoroughly enjoyed entertaining her friends, but she never cared for society just as much.

She was always patient, and never complaining. She never lost her temper, but nothing could move her from what she believe was right. She was not much of a conversationalist, preferring to listen--father was the one who loved to talk.

She always had the same friendly manner for everybody, rich or poor, and often quoted grandma Beach: "It is better to have the good will than



the ill will of even a dog."

She was a thorough musician and played the piano beautifully. Before she was married she played the organ in the church, which she joined when she was twenty one, and she always had music in her home.

She was an accomplished artist as well, and painted many pictures in oil. After I was born she gave that up, and she and a friend, Mrs. Allen, studied china painting and did quite a bit of that.

She dearly loved books. There were so few of them when she was young and magazines were very scarce. She often told about how she and Chloe would breathlessly await the next installment of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," so that their mother could read it to them.

For many years she taught a Sunday School class, and to the end of her life she was active in the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. Until father's sickness she was W. F. M. S. president of the old Kankakee District. One of the highlights of my childhood were the visits of her missionary to China, Eva Gregg.

In the days before Local Option finally made Fairbury a dry town, she was one of the main workers in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. (Tommy once won a prize for his essay against the use of tobacco.)

She was a wonderful cook both by inheritance and inclination, induced by an appreciative family. She must have learned after they moved over to the other house, for she told about the tough crust of a pie she made-- Tommy went out and brought in the axe.

He was particularly fond of cream pie, and pestered her until she finally made him a whole one for himself. He ate it all, but it was the last one he ever tasted.

Never, no matter at what hour father was called, unless she was sick, did mother fail to get up and get him a hot breakfast before he went. And, oh, the scorn he developed for the shiftless women that didn't do that! He had a jewel, and he knew it.



Mother had the shrubbery and gardens planted here when father was first taken sick, and he would often come out to sit in the yard to see what she was having done. She was tied so closely to home that her interest in the flowers was of immense help to her both mentally and physically. She also planted the apple trees in the back. She said that she would not live to enjoy the fruit, but was planting them for us.



There was a coolness between our family and the rest of the relatives that has, in most cases, lasted until now. They were society minded, with all that that means, and Aunt Eda Lewis, father's sister-in-law, was mother's opposite in every way. In addition to her vanity and love of display, she was careless of the feelings of others. Mamie and Tommy would be out playing together, when she would drive by and invite Tommy to go with her, but never Mamie. There were three sets of outraged feelings over that. And there was also the unforgettable time that she met Tommy coming home from the Fairbury Fair. She stopped him and asked him if he had seen all the side shows. He said, no, that he had run out of money. Well," she said, "You just go back and tell them that your grandpa is resident of this Fair and you want in free." Tommy, naturally, followed the suggestion, and mother and father were completely outraged at Aunt Eda.

In the family portrait in front of the steps with grandma and grandpa, Tommy was popping mad, because mother wouldn't let him have the money to start a roller skating rink.

Never have I seen equalled my mother's capacity for uncomplaining endurance of pain and sorrow. She bore the pangs of birth without a sound. When Mamie was born in the night grandma and grandpa Beach didn't know anything about it until father came down the next morning and announced it; and when I was born Mamie and Tommy were asleep upstairs. Such strength must have got from holding to father's hands. My father had hands like that.

Sorrow that would have overwhelmed almost anyone else came when we had four deaths in the immediate family in five years. Grandma went first, then grandpa. Then she lost Mamie by marriage, and a year later had the agonizing experience of watching her first grandchild die a needless death because of an inexperienced doctor. After that came Tommy's long sickness and death.

Years later, when father was so sick for so long, I was nearly frantic



with worry about her, but she calmed me with with a great sureness that I have never forgotten. "No, Alma," she said, "I won't break down. Every morning I pray for the strength for just one day more." My mother didn't talk much about her religion; she lived it.

From middle age she was bothered with her left knee that at times made her quite lame. The fluid in the knee cap had dried up in some way, and, although father and other doctors tried their best they were never able to correct the condition.

Mother was small, about five feet two or three, she was very slender as a girl but grew stout in middle age and then lost flesh again. Her thick black hair grew thin and grey at the last but her big brown eyes were always beautiful.

By the time I was in college I always called her "Elly" as grandfather had done. Mamie called her "Boss."

I can't talk about my mother any more.



### My Father's Boyhood

First of all, you must understand the position of the family life in the 1830's.

Every girl was considered marriageable at sixteen, and it was a deep disgrace to be an "old maid"--no profession save housekeeping was open to "females," as they were commonly called, and a woman who was not a good homemaker felt the full weight of public disapproval. It was no world for careerists.

In those days, when there were no radios, telephones, or automobiles, and very few newspapers to occupy people's minds, the bad roads made each little community a hotbed of gossip, with the opinion of your neighbor something to be feared. And, let me tell you that the housewife who sat down to peel potatoes was considered immorally lazy.

In addition to caring for the house and making the clothes for the family, a wife was obligated by public opinion to bear a large number of children. I put emphasis upon the word "bear," because infant mortality was very high, and more often than not there were more little stones in the family burying lot than little heads at the table.

Therefore, it is particularly remarkable that all of Grandmother <sup>twelve</sup> Lewis' children lived to be married, and all save one died in ripe old age. The exception was Finley, who was fatally kicked by a horse six weeks after his wedding.

Of course the older children had married and had children of their own by the time father, George, was born, and that was the reason why he had nephews his own age.

Willie the son of the oldest brother, John, figured most prominently in some of the escapades, but his own brothers, Hunter and Elmer, were



near enough of an age to help keep things particularly lively.

It was Ollie Boyd, daughter of Alfred Lewis, the seventh child of William and Nancy, who was living on the old home place, and the whole Lewis family are indebted to her and her husband, Mahon, for having kept things so nearly as they were.

The farm is in a little valley on the edge of the hamlet of Berlin. The road has been altered so that it now enters from the rear, but in father's time it came straight down the hill from the main street of the town. The tracks are still visible in the pasture in front of the house.

The school house stood on the main street, and all father had to do in winter time was just jump on his sled and in a minute or two he was at his front door.

One night after school he took Zilla Pomerene, who is the sister of the famous Ohio Senator, and Ada Maxwell before him on his sled. They were nicely started, when, to their horror, they met Zilla's father, Dr. Pomerene, in his sleigh coming up hill to Berlin.

The Doctor was frightened almost out of his wits, and yelled, "Get out of the way, you little devil, you!"

The ditch was preferable to the horse's feet, so father dug his toes in the snow and upset them just in time.

The house is a beautiful old frame one facing the East and surrounded by lovely old trees. It is ninety feet long from front to back, and has ten rooms, a veritable mansion in that day. It is built on the side of the hill, so that on the South you step directly from the living room into the garden. Until a few years ago Grandma Lewis' garden remained as she had left it. It was enclosed by a picket fence higher than one's head. The gate was overgrown by vines, and inside were her rose bushes that they had brought from Pennsylvania.

On the north side of the house the stone foundations of the cellar



Sometimes circumstances compelled the boys to depart very hastily with their loot. One time there was a lone custard pie among the others. Grandfather and Hiatt both wanted it, but by the time they got done arguing which should have it, it was pretty well distributed outside, and neither got it.

Father only had one "stone toy" as a child. It was called a "ball and rocket", and is now in my desk.

are open under the kitchen porch that forms a balcony above it. The floor beneath the balcony is cemented, and it was used for the churning of butter. And it was right over the railing of that porch that father poured water down on Aunt Hattie as she was making butter--then ran.

Aunt Hattie did not always have that job, however, because they had one old dog named "Shep" who ran the treadmill for the churn. The minute Grandma Lewis put the cream in he would jump upon the platform and bark, for his job was the pride of his life.

It was inside the door, however, that leads from under the balcony to the cellar inside that was so enticing to small boys.

When Grandfather Lewis built this new house, he placed it over two ice cold, never-failing springs. Great brimming cement troughs carry the water along two sides of that big room with its cool, fragrant dusk, and in them were huge crocks of cream, butter, fruit, and all kind of luscious things. In Grandmother Lewis' day there also often used to be rows of pies cooling along the edge. In fact, there was every inducement for little boys to make their excuses to leave the field and "go get a drink", and, if one of Grandma Lewis' famous green current pies disappeared with them, it was doubtless quite by accident.

The front of the house was more or less formal with its white picket fence forming a little yard, and its "stoop" of great stone slabs set together--Uncle Elmer mashed a finger helping to get them in place.

The front door opens onto a hallway with its curving stairs; and if you look very closely you can still see, even after years of polishing, the long scratches made by a big brass buttons on grandpa's coat when he slid down the railing.

All the hard wood cherry woodwork was grown on the place, and all the lumber, even to the shingles, was made in Grandfather Lewis' sawmill on the farm.



To the right is the parlor, which as was proper then, held the guest bed. Directly back of this is the dining room. To the left of the hallway is Grandfather and Grandmother Lewis' bedroom. At the end of the hallway and the left of the dining room is the living room, and back of that, again, the enormous kitchen.

In that kitchen centered the whole life of the farm. A huge range filled the far end of it. When Grandma Lewis fried her corn meal mush for her family, she simply took off the top of her stove and put in an enormous iron griddle made especially to fit.

At the end next the dining room a big trap door, operated by weights, still leads to the spring room. Directly above it are the enclosed back stairs to the bedrooms above. A door opens into them.

It was this very door that solved a problem for father. Uncle Hunter was paying a good deal of attention to a certain young lady in the neighborhood, but neither hints nor direct questions availed as to what time he had been getting home. So father simply tied a rope to the door knob and fastened the other end of it to a bucket of ear corn at the top of the stairs. Hunter's return late that night was excellently advertised.

The kitchen was a wonderful place for games. One time, when Uncle Crawford was home on a vacation from school, they were playing Blind Man's Buff. There were pegs by the door for hanging up "wraps", and Crawford picked up father and put him in a pair of Grandfather Lewis' pants. They were so big as to completely hide him. Hunter was "It". In groping around he felt something, shook it, and the pants fell down, knocking loose father's front teeth.

The last room to the rear is an enormous woodshed. It is two stories high with the great beams exposed. At the back door still hangs Grandma Lewis' old dinner bell. Before this was put up, she used, a big, long,



tin horn to call the men to meals.

In this woodshed is a historic spot. Above the end of the kitchen there is a sort of an open attic that can be reached by a small door from the bedroom adjoining it. There is no wall on the woodshed side, and it stands there, high above one's head, a black, mysterious hole.

That was the place that father and Willie first hid the night they put the bumble bees down the stove pipe hole.

It was customary, as the boys married, to bring their brides home for a visit. The elder children were regarded with awe by the little children, but Hunter had shared their pranks, and was only a little older--a mere matter of three years (but, however, which automatically makes grandfather and Willie old enough to have known better. But, then, Hunter, too, should have known better than to have taken his life in his hands by coming home on such an occasion.)

At any rate, Willie and father decided to celebrate. They got one of Grandma Lewis' aprons. And the aprons at that time were no scant kitchenette affairs, but voluminous blue and white checked calico ones that reached well around and nearly touched the floor. I say, they took one of Grandma aprons and departed secretly to a log where a bumble bee's nest was hidden. The method was simple. Father held the apron over the mouth of the log while Willie beat on it with a stick. In a few minutes they were the captors of a swarm of thoroughly maddened bumble bees. They hid them under their bed upstairs and proceeded to cut a neat hole in Grandma Lewis' good carpet.

It was but the work of a moment, later, when all was dark and still, to empty the deadly contents of that apron down the hole in the floor into Hunter's bedroom below.

At first it was desperately funny to hear Hunter plunging around the



room and swearing, but soon there came an appalling new sound. Aunt Lessie was crying. As the bees got down to work and she went into hysterics, Grandfather and Grandma Lewis moved into action and a boy hunt was staged. It was impossible, however, to give a really thorough search when Aunt Lessie was in such a nervous state, particularly when the persons wanted had crawled, for further safety, on to the rafters over the big woodshed; so they spent a good part of the rest of the night cleaning out the bumble bees and getting her quieted.

When they figured they were quite safe, two thoroughly scared boys sneaked back to bed. But the really remarkable part about it was that they went unpunished. They were big, anyway, and I suppose that Grandfather Lewis was so exhausted by the night's experiences that he simply lacked the strength.

Anyway, when father took mother home on his wedding trip, he took his tiny bride on his arm, for she weighed only ninety-eight pounds and was just like a big doll. He set her down before Grandma Lewis and said, "Here's my wife, Mother." And thenceforth, for the rest of the visit, he exhibited a nature that was suspicious to extremity, particularly about going out of doors at night. Possibly it was because of this vigilance, but, at any rate, nothing happened.

There were high jinks, too, when the boys went calling on their girls.

One time Harry, a brother of Willie's, stopped at his grandfather's-- a very popular place, by the way, for boys to stop. Willie and father knew from the looks of Harry's best clothes and the shine of the buggy where he was going; so, as soon as he was out of sight, they got a bucket of bright red paint and colored the <sup>brown</sup> ~~bees~~ spots on Harry's brown and white horse.

Presently, Harry, with all his stylishness, came out to untie his



horse--to go leaping back to the kitchen to ask for some hot water and soap. Grandma Lewis wanted to know what he was going to do with it, and he had to tell her.

They say that Grandma Lewis never laughed out loud but just shook all over, and that time she was a small earthquake.

There were times, too, when the girls themselves did not escape. On one occasion a couple of girls were out from town to visit Aunt Hattie, and one of the boys was going to take them home. So the boys caught some fleas and put them in a can, and just before the party started they let them loose in the tanned sheep skin that was used for the bottom of the buggy. (Remember that in those days it was most improper for a young lady to have legs.)

The Lewis' were a very musical family. When the three older children, each of whom was gifted with a good voice, were too young to go alone to a singing school, Grandfather Lewis determined to take them himself, and became so enthused that he enrolled as a pupil.

Five of his boys belonged to the Berlin Band. Alfred played the bass horn, Finley the tenor horn, Elmer the coronet, Hunter the bass drum and cymbals, and father the snare drum. That was when he was about ten years old. Later he played the cornet.

They had no uniforms, but they did have a special band wagon, a scarlet one that was built higher in the front and rear, and was pulled by six big black horses.

They always made the trip out from town to the Lewis Farm, since five of the players were there, and it was a brave sight to see the red wagon with its black horses and flashing instruments come rumbling down the Berlin Hill. Back in town again Hunter would hold his cymbal over for father to play on it, to the great admiration of the little girls his age.



They played at picnics and Fourth of July celebrations, and sometimes they gave concerts at the town halls of the different towns round about where they charged a quarter admission.

One time the regular cornet player went in his own buggy and father filled his place, but he couldn't play the instrument. By the time they had reached their destination his conscience hurt him so that he payed his own way into the concert. He never quite got over that act of Puritanism.

A brother-in-law, Frank Ross, played a big bass horn that hung over his shoulder. One time, at a Fourth of July picnic, Hunter threw a chicken leg into it. He had quite a time blowing it during the afternoon, but supposed he had eaten too much. When he got home he set the horn in its accustomed place in a corner in the parlor. A week or so later his mother noticed a horrible odor and suspected a dead rat. So she poured scalding water into the horn and got the chicken leg out.

It was Hunter, too, who helped when they were conducting Revival Services at the church, and the different members called on the prospective converts in their homes. When he knelt to pray with a Mrs. Johnson, her bulldog under the living room stove started to growl, and Hunter cut the prayer short.

Sunday afternoons were combustible times for the family of boys since the church rules for proper conduct on Sundays were so strict, and Grandfather was an ardent Methodist.

Itinerant preachers were always entertained at his home, and as they always carried good books to sell the children eagerly watched for their coming. Father also remembered a quarterly meeting when they entertained one-hundred at dinner, and the enormous quantities of ham and eggs that were served.

This close contact with the church resulted in two of their daughters



marrying ministers. One of these was Hattie, father's favorite sister, who had crawled out of her bedroom window one night to go to a dance. There is another story about her of how she jumped from the school room window stright on to her horse's back. She was a brilliant horsewoman; and made an even more brilliant and successful pastor's wife.

But, as I was saying, the long sunny summer Sunday afternoons did drag, and there being no games they could play, it was natural that they should gravitate to the barn and stir up amusement out there.

Grandfather Lewis always kept a great many sheep. During the Civil War, when wool was a dollar a pound, he had a thousand of them, and bought fine imported rams. One of the favorite pastimes of the boys was to try and ride them. Now in riding a sheep you reverse ends. You put your legs around the sheep's neck and catch your hands in the wool on its hips. Willie was exhibiting on a ram. It stumbled and fell on the run, and they were going so fast that they went head over heels, and the ram's back bone struck Willie squarely on the nose.

One of my favorite childhood stories, which father afterwards confessed was just fabricated, was one concerning Uncle Elmer. He was supposed to have been down in the oat field by the creek playing with a ram. He was on all fours making passes at it, and when the old fellow charged he would lie flat. But, unfortunately, as an oat stubble ran into his nose, he jerked up and was knocked into the creek.

One thing that really did happen was when all the boys were performing stunts. Elmer jumped on a cow, and the cow gave a big leap and threw him so that his "tail bone" struck on a stone. He was a good sized fellow; so they all geyed him when he cried. But that didn't stop him.

"You'd cry, too, if you got hurt like that."

It was Crawford who would get the little fellows on the horses going to water. The horses would rub around the straw stack and rub them off.



It was Crawford, too, who was studying, to be a doctor at the time when ether had just been discovered, and all the medical men were experimenting with it. A few whiffs of it made animals gloriously drunk, and the boys laughed themselves sick at the maudlin antics of some turkey gobblers. Even dignified "Old Lion", the dog, tried to cross the running board of the creek and fell in.

The geese they let alone, being full of respect for the birds, for Vernon, as a child, had misbehaved to one of them, whereupon the old gander grabbed him by the ear and led him around the house, spanking him smartly with his wing as they marched.

Elmer had aspirations to be a doctor, too, but, when a man driving cattle was kicked by a steer and his nose broken, Crawford wanted Elmer to hold the lamp while he sewed him up. Elmer nearly fainted and had to give the lamp to someone else, and his medical dreams died right then.

Grandfather Lewis was a great stock man and took great pride in his riding and driving horses. Each of the children had his own saddle horse. Father's was "Bird"; Hunter rode "Black Hawk", and Aunt Hattie rode "Mohawk"--the finest horses in that part of the country.

All of which lead to the adventure of Abe Stutzeman's chairs.

Abe Stutzeman was an old man who lived about five miles from Grandfather's. He was possessed with the idea that he would live forever. He lived with his son and made split bottomed chairs, and in travelling around he always carried one of his rocking chairs strapped to his back to sit down on.

He gave away the chairs he made, never accepting money, but taking gifts. The only stipulation he made was that the person wanting a chair must walk to his home.



Willie and father mounted Bird and rode away to Abe Stutzeman's house. About a mile away from the house they stopped and tied Bird out of sight behind some bushes and then walked the rest of the way.

The old man saw horse hairs on their trousers, but they told him they had got those on there that morning. Whereupon they made him a present of some of Grandma Lewis' good home made bread, and Willie received in return a straight chair, while father got a rocker.

They got back to their horse safely, and father mounted and put the chairs over his arms to carry, and Willie rode in the back again. They were late, and father pushed Bird to a lope. The chairs slatted against his sides with every spring, and the panic was on. Willie jumped, but father couldn't look back to see if he were hurt.

There was a gate at the foot of the hill, and the great question was whether the horse would jump it or whirl. Instead, he came to a sudden stop, and the chairs and father went over his head in a heap. Just then Willie, unhurt, came over the hill and hustled to the rescue. Afterwards Alfred rubbed the chair over the horse's head, but it didn't do any good.

There were other trips, too, but those were generally to visit relatives. When he was about eight years old, Grandma Lewis' mother, Grandma Crawford, was very ill, and she drove the forty miles to Canal Dover to see her. Being the youngest child, father got to go with her. The weather was terrible and the roads were worse. In one place they met a four horse team hitched to an empty wagon stalled going downhill.

Grandma Lewis wanted to surprise everybody; so, when they got in at night, she asked for lodging there, and was informed that they didn't keep strangers, which greatly amused her son.

He had his hands full the next morning, because Grandma Crawford lived with her son, Uncle John, and his sons tried to make father help with the